

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Dr. John C. Bugher, Director, Division of
Biology and Medicine, AEC, Washington

FROM : Merrill Eisenbud, Director, Health and Safety
Laboratory, New York Operations Office

DATE: May 28, 1954

405033

SUBJECT: COOPERATION WITH THE PHOTOGRAPHIC INDUSTRY

SYMBOL: HS:DEL

Mr. William C. Babbitt, Secretary of the National Association of Photographic Manufacturers, Inc., has recently said that he is "unhappy" about the information which we have given him this Spring to be used by the industry in planning to minimize contamination of their products by fallout from weapons tests. He points out, with justification, that we have given him very little useful information in relation to the recent test series. He believes that we could and should have given him more information.

The information of most value to the industry concerns the expected dates of the beginning and end of each test series in Nevada and in the Pacific. We have given them all estimates of such dates which we were permitted to reveal. We obtain approval from the Division of Military Applications and then send secret and confidential information to the industry's cleared technical committee and unclassified, restricted or "official use only" information to Mr. Babbitt.

The need of the industry for information and our response to it up to last year are summarized in the enclosed letters from officials of the Eastman Kodak Company to the Honorable W. Sterling Cole and Commissioner Zuckert. The letter to Commissioner Zuckert gives \$276,701 as the measurable portion of the losses to Eastman due to weapons tests since the beginning of 1951. Both letters express satisfaction with the information we provided as aids in cutting down losses.

This year we have given Mr. Babbitt the following information:

- a. Assurance that no tests were planned to occur before February 1st of this year and that no continental tests are planned for the 12 months following January.
- b. An estimate, furnished about a week before the official announcement of the completion of the series, that it would end about the end of June. This estimate had previously been published.

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- c. Confirmation of official news releases after publication. The releases announced the completion of three test explosions.
- d. After-the-fact data on fallout in certain U. S. locations.
- e. Occasional warnings of possible areas of contamination, usually after the contamination had begun.

We recently sent Dr. Webb of the technical committee the then confidential prediction that the tests would be over by June 1st, but he must have read of their completion in the newspapers before he received our letter.

To illustrate the effects of our information policy Mr. Babbitt reports that, on the basis of our estimate of completion by the end of June, one photographic paper company decided that they could not wait so long and went ahead with their manufacturing operation. They started "right ahead of our belated warning on contaminated rainfall". The product must be tested and the contaminated lots thrown out. Had they known that the tests would be over in a week they would have postponed the operation.

Earlier in the series he reported that one company had to shut down twice on account of a contaminated water supply at times for which we had said no significant fallout was to be expected.

We provided contrastingly better service to the industry last year. We were able to furnish more precise estimates of the beginning and ending dates of the Spring series. For several days after each burst we were in daily communication, including Saturdays and Sundays, with the Weather Bureau and with Mr. Babbitt and we passed on to him predicted trajectories and areas of probable wet and dry fallout. Shortly after the end of the series we were allowed to inform the industry that no further tests, either continental or Pacific, were planned before January 1st of this year. Later the date was extended to February 1st.

At one time there was an opinion that Pacific tests occurred too far away to interfere with the photographic industry. The fact that they do interfere is shown by the experience of the industry this Spring.

The Commission may wish to consider giving the photographic industry information about foreign tests which comes to its attention. The Eastman Kodak Company raises this question in their letter to Congressman Cole (Point 2 of the summary).

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It is suggested that the officials in our Washington Office who are concerned with this problem discuss it among themselves and then meet with representatives of the photographic industry's technical committee, with the object of reaching an understanding concerning the requirements of the industry for information and the extent to which their needs can be met.

Enclosure:

1. Eastman Kodak Ltr. 7/17/53
2. " " " 10/29/53

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